

Delivering on America's Priorities – Medicare Rx Drug Benefit

Congress made a promise to America's seniors to deliver better Medicare and a prescription drug benefit.

- The promise has been met – and a bipartisan bill passed Congress and is now law.
- Traditional Medicare is strengthened and improved to keep up with advancements in health care, including disease management and preventive care.
- For the first time ever, America's seniors enrolled in the Medicare program have access to a prescription drug benefit.

Medicare's prescription drug benefit will offer voluntary drug coverage to 42 million seniors and people with disabilities.

- Beginning January 1, 2006, this coverage will be available to all people in Medicare.
- It pays for both brand name and generic drugs, and offers a choice of plans.
- Seniors who need the most help to pay for prescription drugs receive the most help under the new Medicare law.

Everyone in Medicare should give serious consideration to enrolling for prescription drug coverage.

- Tens of thousands of enrollment events will take place across the country. Some of these events will be sponsored by the Social Security Administration and by Medicare, or by organizations that represent seniors and patients.
- Everyone who has a family member or a friend in Medicare has a vital role to play in helping educate these beneficiaries about the Medicare drug benefit.
- Signing up for Medicare prescription drug coverage will make it easier to pay for the medications you need to stay healthy.

Source: Senate Republican Conference, Health Care Communications Working Group

Things to Remember about the New Medicare Prescription Drug Benefit Program:

- Everyone in Medicare will find value in the Medicare prescription drug benefit and should give serious consideration to enrollment.
- The Medicare prescription drug benefit will provide reliable, affordable and guaranteed coverage to medication.
- Everyone has a vital role in educating people in Medicare about the new benefit.

Important Dates:

- October 2005 - Medicare & You handbook with more information on how to sign up.
- November 15, 2005 - Sign up starts.
- January 1, 2006 - Coverage starts for those who signed up by December 31, 2005.
- May 15, 2006 - Last day to sign up in 2006. Remember to join by this date or you will have to wait until November 15, 2006 to join and you may pay higher premiums.

Additional Information:

For more information about getting help with your prescription drug costs, call Social Security at 1-800-772-1213 (TTY 1-800-325-0778) or visit www.socialsecurity.gov <<http://www.socialsecurity.gov>>.

To learn more about the Medicare prescription drug plan, call 1-800-MEDICARE (1-800-633-4227) or visit www.medicare.gov <<http://www.medicare.gov>>.

